



Committee on Homeland Security Democrats

Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member

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U.S. COAST GUARD'S HOMELAND SECURITY MISSIONS EVALUATED AT SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING

WASHINGTON— U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-MS), ranking member of the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security, today stressed the need for the U.S. Coast Guard to have all resources necessary to complete the security planning required by a law passed just after the 9/11 terrorist attacks—and urged by the recently enacted 9/11 bill.

The Homeland Security Committee's Subcommittee on Economic Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Cybersecurity today examined the steps the U.S. Coast Guard has taken to secure the nation's ports and waterways since September 11, 2001 and to review the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2005 (H.R. 889).

"The U.S. Coast Guard must have the support it needs to keep America's ports and coastlines safe and secure," said Rep. Thompson. "A successful homeland security strategy depends on the security of our ports and waterways, which in turn means we must ensure the Coast Guard is robust, dynamic, and fully capable of performing of a diverse set of missions."

The Coast Guard is also responsible for executing the 2002 Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA), which requires security plans to be created at the national, regional, and local port level, as well as security assessments of foreign ports and vessel tracking systems. Three years after the law's enactment all of the MTSA requirements still have not been implemented.

"I know the Coast Guard has run into problems with implementing MTSA, and I hope DHS can soon provide the proper management and guidance that will allow the Coast Guard to implement this law that is vital to making America safer," Rep. Thompson added.

H.R. 889 authorizes an additional \$189 million to the U.S. Coast Guard, beyond the president's budget and increases the active duty size of the Guard to 45,500. Lack of funding and management challenges have enabled the U.S. Coast Guard to fully support critical programs to the Guard such as "Deepwater," which was created to detect and intercept threats offshore, as well as improve the monitoring of domestic ports.

"I supported the authorization of \$1.1 billion for Deepwater last year as a conferee during the 2004 Coast Guard authorization bill, but the management challenges raised by the GAO are considerable. We simply cannot allow poor management to result in squandered resources and delays in the implementation of important homeland security projects such as Deepwater."

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